

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
WAYCROSS DIVISION**



By mgarcia at 4:26 pm, Feb 07, 2020

MCKLOYD BROOKS,

Petitioner,

v.

WARE COUNTY JAIL; and RANDY
ROYAL,

Respondents.

CIVIL ACTION NO.: 5:19-cv-124

ORDER AND MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

This matter comes before the Court upon Petitioner McKloyd Brooks's ("Brooks") failure to comply with the Court's January 10, 2020 Order and his failure to prosecute. Doc. 3. For the following reasons, I **RECOMMEND** the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** Brooks's Petition for failure to follow the Court's Order and failure to prosecute. I also **RECOMMEND** the Court **DIRECT** the Clerk of Court to **CLOSE** this case and enter the appropriate judgment of dismissal and **DENY** Brooks leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*.¹ I **DENY as moot** Brooks's Motion for Leave to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis* in this Court. Doc. 2.

¹ A "district court can only dismiss an action on its own motion as long as the procedure employed is fair. . . . To employ fair procedure, a district court must generally provide the plaintiff with notice of its intent to dismiss or an opportunity to respond." *Tazoe v. Airbus S.A.S.*, 631 F.3d 1321, 1336 (11th Cir. 2011) (citations and internal quotation marks omitted). A magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation provides such notice and opportunity to respond. *See Shivers v. Int'l Bhd. of Elec. Workers Local Union*, 349, 262 F. App'x 121, 125, 127 (11th Cir. 2008) (indicating that a party has notice of a district court's intent to sua sponte grant summary judgment where a magistrate judge issues a report recommending the sua sponte granting of summary judgment); *Anderson v. Dunbar Armored, Inc.*, 678 F. Supp. 2d 1280, 1296 (N.D. Ga. 2009) (noting that report and recommendation served as notice that claims would be sua sponte dismissed). This Report and Recommendation constitutes fair notice to Brooks that his suit is due to be dismissed. As indicated below, Brooks will have the opportunity to present his objections to this finding, and the presiding district judge will review de novo properly submitted objections. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72; *see also Glover v. Williams*, No.

BACKGROUND

On December 23, 2019, Brooks filed a 28 U.S.C. § 2241 Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus and a Motion for Leave to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis*. Docs. 1, 2. The Court deferred ruling on Brooks's Motion, as it was not clear whether he wished to attack his custody in a state penal institution or his conditions of confinement. Doc. 3 at 1. The Court directed Brooks to either amend his Petition or file a civil rights action and to submit the proper form within 21 days. Id. To assist Brooks, the Court also directed the Clerk of Court to provide blank copies of a 28 U.S.C. § 2254 form, a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 form, and this Court's preferred *in forma pauperis* form. Id. The Court warned Brooks his failure to follow this Court's Order "in a timely or otherwise appropriate manner will result in the dismissal of his Petition without prejudice for failure to follow a Court Order and failure to prosecute." Id. at 2. That Order and the attachments, docs. 3, 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, were not returned to the Court as undeliverable or as otherwise failing to reach Brooks. Brooks did not respond to the Court's Order within 21 days, as directed. In fact, Brooks has made no filings in this case since he filed his Petition and Motion for Leave to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis*.

DISCUSSION

The Court must now determine how to address Brooks's failure to comply with this Court's Order and failure to prosecute. For the reasons set forth below, I **RECOMMEND** the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** Brooks's Petition. I also **RECOMMEND** the Court **DIRECT** the Clerk of Court to **CLOSE** this case and enter the appropriate judgment of dismissal and **DENY** Brooks leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*.

1:12-CV-3562, 2012 WL 5930633, at *1 (N.D. Ga. Oct. 18, 2012) (explaining that magistrate judge's report and recommendation constituted adequate notice and petitioner's opportunity to file objections provided a reasonable opportunity to respond).

I. Dismissal for Failure to Follow this Court’s Order and Failure to Prosecute

A district court may dismiss a petitioner’s claims for failure to prosecute pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) (“Rule 41(b)”) and the court’s inherent authority to manage its docket. Link v. Wabash R.R. Co., 370 U.S. 626 (1962);² Coleman v. St. Lucie Cty. Jail, 433 F. App’x 716, 718 (11th Cir. 2011) (citing Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b) and Betty K Agencies, Ltd. v. M/V MONADA, 432 F.3d 1333, 1337 (11th Cir. 2005)). In particular, Rule 41(b) allows for the involuntary dismissal of a petitioner’s claims where he has failed to prosecute those claims, comply with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or local rules, or follow a court order. Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b); see also Coleman, 433 F. App’x at 718; Sanders v. Barrett, No. 05-12660, 2005 WL 2640979, at *1 (11th Cir. Oct. 17, 2005) (citing Kilgo v. Ricks, 983 F.2d 189, 192 (11th Cir. 1993)); cf. Local R. 41.1(b) (“[T]he assigned Judge may, after notice to counsel of record, *sua sponte* . . . dismiss any action for want of prosecution, with or without prejudice[,] . . . [based on] willful disobedience or neglect of any order of the Court.” (emphasis omitted)). Additionally, a district court’s “power to dismiss is an inherent aspect of its authority to enforce its orders and ensure prompt disposition of lawsuits.” Brown v. Tallahassee Police Dep’t, 205 F. App’x 802, 802 (11th Cir. 2006) (quoting Jones v. Graham, 709 F.2d 1457, 1458 (11th Cir. 1983)).

It is true that dismissal with prejudice for failure to prosecute is a “sanction . . . to be utilized only in extreme situations” and requires that a court “(1) conclud[e] a clear record of delay or willful contempt exists; and (2) mak[e] an implicit or explicit finding that lesser sanctions would not suffice.” Thomas v. Montgomery Cty. Bd. of Educ., 170 F. App’x 623,

² In Wabash, the Court held that a trial court may dismiss an action for failure to prosecute “even without affording notice of its intention to do so.” 370 U.S. at 633. However, in this case, Brooks was forewarned of the consequences of failing to respond to this Court’s Order. Doc. 3.

625–26 (11th Cir. 2006) (quoting Morewitz v. West of Eng. Ship Owners Mut. Prot. & Indem. Ass’n (Lux.), 62 F.3d 1356, 1366 (11th Cir. 1995)); see also Taylor v. Spaziano, 251 F. App’x 616, 619 (11th Cir. 2007) (citing Morewitz, 62 F.3d at 1366). By contrast, dismissal *without* prejudice for failure to prosecute is not an adjudication on the merits, and, therefore, courts are afforded greater discretion in dismissing claims in this manner. Taylor, 251 F. App’x at 619; see also Coleman, 433 F. App’x at 719; Brown, 205 F. App’x at 802–03.

While the Court exercises its discretion to dismiss cases with caution, dismissal of this action without prejudice is warranted. See Coleman, 433 F. App’x at 719 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute, where plaintiff did not respond to court order to supply defendant’s current address for purpose of service); Brown, 205 F. App’x at 802–03 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute, where plaintiff failed to follow court order to file amended complaint and court had informed plaintiff that noncompliance could lead to dismissal).

Brooks failed to follow this Court’s Order, despite having ample opportunity to do so and being forewarned of the consequences of his failure to do so. Doc. 3. Thus, the Court should **DISMISS without prejudice** Brooks’s § 2241 Petition. Doc. 1.

II. Leave to Appeal *in Forma Pauperis*

The Court should also deny Brooks leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*. Though Brooks has not yet filed a notice of appeal, it would be appropriate to address that issue in the Court’s order of dismissal. See Fed. R. App. P. 24(a)(3) (trial court may certify that appeal is not taken in good faith “before or after the notice of appeal is filed”).

An appeal cannot be taken *in forma pauperis* if the trial court certifies, either before or after the notice of appeal is filed, that the appeal is not taken in good faith. 28 U.S.C.

§ 1915(a)(3); Fed. R. App. P. 24(a)(3). Good faith in this context must be judged by an objective standard. Busch v. County of Volusia, 189 F.R.D. 687, 691 (M.D. Fla. 1999). A party does not proceed in good faith when he seeks to advance a frivolous claim or argument. See Coppedge v. United States, 369 U.S. 438, 445 (1962). A claim or argument is frivolous when it appears the factual allegations are clearly baseless or the legal theories are indisputably meritless. Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 327 (1989); Carroll v. Gross, 984 F.2d 392, 393 (11th Cir. 1993). An *in forma pauperis* action is frivolous and not brought in good faith if it is “without arguable merit either in law or fact.” Napier v. Preslicka, 314 F.3d 528, 531 (11th Cir. 2002); see also Brown v. United States, Nos. 407CV085, 403CR001, 2009 WL 307872, at *1–2 (S.D. Ga. Feb. 9, 2009).

Based on the above analysis of Brooks’s failure to follow this Court’s directive, there are no non-frivolous issues to raise on appeal, and an appeal would not be taken in good faith. Thus, the Court should **DENY** Brooks *in forma pauperis* status on appeal.

CONCLUSION

I **RECOMMEND** the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** Brooks’s Petition for failure to follow the Court’s Order and failure to prosecute, **DIRECT** the Clerk of Court to **CLOSE** this case and enter the appropriate judgment of dismissal, and **DENY** Brooks leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*. I **DENY as moot** Brooks’s Motion for Leave to Proceed *in Forma Pauperis* in this Court. Doc. 2.

The Court **ORDERS** any party seeking to object to this Report and Recommendation to file specific written objections within 14 days of the date on which this Report and Recommendation is entered. Any objections asserting that the undersigned failed to address any contention raised in the pleading must also be included. Failure to do so will bar any later challenge or review of the factual findings or legal conclusions herein. See 28 U.S.C.

§ 636(b)(1)(C); Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140 (1985). A copy of the objections must be served upon all other parties to the action.

Upon receipt of objections meeting the specificity requirement set out above, a United States District Judge will make a de novo determination of those portions of the report, proposed findings, or recommendation to which objection is made and may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made herein. Objections not meeting the specificity requirement set out above will not be considered by the District Judge. The Court **DIRECTS** the Clerk of Court to serve a copy of this Report and Recommendation upon Brooks.

SO ORDERED and **REPORTED** and **RECOMMENDED**, this 7th day of February, 2020.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Cheesbro', is written over a horizontal line.

BENJAMIN W. CHEESBRO
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA